

root crops could be kept for longer periods. Is there any surprise that salt meat, potatoes, fried chicken, eggs, grits, and bread of all sorts are favorites in southern cuisine?

Without a doubt, these wives are remarkable people. They were hardy women who loved and cared for their families as much as anyone can today. The biggest difference is that their vulnerability was so much more. Many died early due to the rigors of having children in the numbers they did and lack of medical care. Of course, many men died early too. Still, there are many instances of women living long lives and often outliving their husbands. Mary Bell Flanagan was a good example of that. She had 10 children then spent the last twenty years of her married life not having children. That may have helped with her longevity.

What a debt we owe the women who are our forbearers! In a highly patriarchal society, they supported their husbands and children and at the same time provided for the social and educational well being of the family. Having grown up with mothers and having lived with women ourselves, however, we might suppose these women were not as shy and retiring as it might seem. There had to be some strong willed women in the group.